

### *Editorial Department.*

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WE take this occasion to say a few words to our subscribers, in relation to the condition, prospects, and sphere of the JOURNAL.

That its condition has been steadily improving, we think our readers will admit, and we have every reason to be gratified at the gracious reception accorded to it both in this country and abroad. Its success has fully equaled our most sanguine expectations.

We desire chiefly, however, to call attention to the next, or fourth volume. With enlarged experience on our part, and a more general and generous support on the part of members of the profession, we expect to render it more worthy than it has ever been of their regards.

In the forthcoming volume, it is our intention to bring each number up to full two hundred pages. In the first department, or that for original matter and selections, we have the promise of a full supply of original matter of interest to our readers, and of permanent value in neurological medicine. Among other features in this department, are to be critical analyses of rare or typical cases, from private and hospital practice, and full accounts of matters of interest in neurological medicine, from the principal medical centers in the country, in the form of notes and correspondence. More attention will be given also, to psychological medicine, strictly so-called. But the main effort of our JOURNAL, will continue to be, as heretofore, in the direction of a study of all that pertains to the nervous system, in health and disease. And after all, in the final analysis, even that class of diseases called mental, must be referred to some material change or lesion, and we are thus led in our studies, back to the nervous system. Our attention must be steadily fixed on it, for practical purposes no matter whether the phenomena be purely somatic or mental.

In the department for Reviews, we expect to improve our JOURNAL in tone and thoroughness, and to afford full and critical surveys of the best neurological literature of the day, whether home or foreign. Besides a review of separate works, it is our intention also, to give in each number, a critical summary of our existing recent knowledge, in regard to some one or more important subjects in the domain of neurological medicine, scientific or practical, gathered from a wide range of periodicals and special works.

In other respects, the JOURNAL will continue to reflect more fully, perhaps, than any other periodical, the progress of medicine, as it relates to the nervous system.

We may also be permitted to express our thanks, for the kindly and flattering manner in which the Journal has been received by the best members of the profession, both at home and abroad, so far as they have made its acquaintance.

To our subscribers we would turn, with a lively confidence, that if we have been able to interest and benefit them in the past, we will be better able to do so in the future.

In our endeavors to carry out our designs, we do not hesitate to ask the substantial support of the profession.

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There is one feature in medical Journalism with which we have been long impressed, and it lies in the department of so-called original matter. We are perfectly aware of a certain numerical and ennnulative value, attaching especially to clinical observations, which justifies the repetition from year to year, in the same periodical or different ones, of the same kind of cases. There is a reason, having a statistical bearing for example, in reporting similar cases of amputation of the leg in some part, or in continuing to report lithotomies performed in a certain way, and with all needful particulars. But what real value there is in the majority of the "Clinical Reports" of abscess, simple fracture, fistula, simple tumor, harelip, typhoid fever paralysis, cerebral hemorrhage, strabismus, chronic otitis, etc., etc., as they are usually given from the "service" of this professor or that one, is more than we have been able to tell, unless it is simply to "fill up."

The only title to being called "original," such reports usually have, is that *they* have not been reported before.

They certainly do not convey any new facts, ideas, or reasonings. Too often they do not, and from the nature of our existing knowledge of the category of cases to which they belong, they cannot have any real statistical value, and yet they continue to appear. It would be easy to fill page after page, with these really useless "clinical" histories, from our files of journals of the present year, both indigenous and foreign. To make good our point, we are glad not to be obliged to make such a compilation.

But we can give a few samples of titles of such reports, and could extend the list indefinitely. Thus we take from medical periodicals at our hands, almost at random, the following: "Chlorosis," no observations or discussions in any sense new or valuable: "Stricture of the Urethra," "*Death* from Rupture of an Aneurism," "An Improved Obstetrical Forceps," "Case of Pneumonia," "Case of Typhoid Fever," "Case of Premature Delivery at Sixth Month," "Scrofulous Abscess," "Fracture of Fore-arm, etc.," "Injury to Elbow," "Compound Dislocation of the Ankle," "Fracture of Clavicle," "Amputation of Foot for Frost-bite," "Railroad Injury of Foot," "Injury of Elbow," "Varicose Veins," "Case of Purulent Ophthalmia," "Case of Placenta Prævia," "Case of Nasal Catarrh," "Case of Gonorrhea," etc., etc. And we must add that not one of these "original reports," whose titles we give, conveys a single item of new information of any kind. There is simply a bare recital of facts that are patent to the common sense or daily reading of every student, and, which have been repeated hundreds of times, in much the same phraseology since the days of the fathers of medicine. There is no earthly rational excuse for occupying space, and for crowding the annals of medicine with such matter. We fear too few will agree with us, when we pronounce the mass of such matter, under whatsoever name it appears, as scientifically worthless. It would be to the credit of medical literature, if it should cease to appear.

These remarks are made simply to call the attention of such as may be engaged in conducting medical periodicals, and may

chance to see these lines, to this really important subject, as we approach the termination of this and the beginning of another year, to the end that more care may be exercised in the future in the admission of matter into the pages of the publications they may control, whether they are periodical or occasional.

There is certainly room for improvement here. We would earnestly bespeak a more clear recognition, and closer adhesion to the requirements of a common sense utility in the selection of original "Clinical" matter. It would be better to fill our pages with well selected extracts, and critical discussions on the current literature of medicine and collateral science, than to burden them with such matter.

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Early in June, last, a meeting of the superintendents of asylums for idiots and feeble-minded, was held at the Pennsylvania Institute at Media, in that State, and a national "Association for the Relief of Idiots and the Feeble-minded," was organized and elected the following list of officers:

President, E. Seguin, M. D., New York; Vice President, H. B. Wilbur, M. D., Syracuse, N. Y.; Secretary, Isaac N. Kerlin, of Media, Pa. A full discussion of the condition of the work of education of idiots and feeble-minded in this country, and of the objects that it seemed desirable the proposed organization should accomplish, was had, but without final results. Most questions of importance that were raised, lie over until the next meeting, which will be held at Columbus, Ohio, June 5th, 1877.

It is greatly to be hoped, that the labors of this Association may result in lasting benefit to the unfortunate class, to whose interests it is devoted. We shall contemplate its future work with considerable expectation.

But we have wondered why the superintendents of asylums for idiots, etc., could not find a congenial home, in the already existing "Association of Medical Superintendents" of asylums for the insane? In the British "Medico-Psychological Association," the superintendents of asylums for insane and for idiots, meet on a common footing. The same we believe to be true in France and Germany. We are at a loss, as to why there

should be any more necessity in this country than abroad, for the formation of a distinct association for superintendents of Asylums for Idiots. But whatever the reasons may be, for its separate existence, we wish the Association success.

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Dr. G. W. Wells, of New York, has been duly appointed our correspondent to fully report all matters of general interest, which occur in that city and vicinity. His first contribution appears in the present issue. It is our intention to make similar arrangements in other medical centres in this country.

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